



Taupō District Plan

REVIEW

Te Arotakenga i te Mahere ā-Rohe o Taupō

Section 32 Evaluation Report

Plan Change 45 -

Neighbourhood Centre Zone

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Introduction

This report is prepared to fulfil the requirements of Section 32 of the Resource Management Act 1991 ('the RMA'). The Section 32 report should be read in conjunction with the plan change document.

The Taupō District Plan (TDP) became operative in 2007.

In May 2020, the Council resolved to commence a comprehensive review of the District Plan, with the support of the Joint Management Agreement Partners. However, while this work was being undertaken, there was an awareness that the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) reform was gathering momentum. When the Exposure Draft for the Natural and Built Environment Act (NBEA) was released in April 2021 it was used as a review point for the approach for the District Plan Review.

In July 2021, the Council agreed to change the approach from a Comprehensive Review of the TDP to a more refined series of plan changes. This was based on the resources required to complete a full district plan review and in the face of moving to a regional planning model under the NBEA. This was formally resolved by Council on 29 March 2022 and the previous commencement resolution revoked. Between 2022 and 2024 the first bundle of six plan changes were developed and taken through the First Schedule process. These plan changes were:

- Plan Change 38 – Strategic Directions
- Plan Change 39 – Residential Building Coverage
- Plan Change 40 – Taupō Town Centre
- Plan Change 41 – Deletion of Fault Lines
- Plan Change 42 – General Rural and Rural Lifestyle Environments
- Plan Change 43 – Taupō Industrial Environments

In 2024, given the continued uncertainty of the legislative background (with the NBEA and SPA being revoked), the approach of the sectional review of the district plan was continued. This leads to the current set of plan changes including the Neighbourhood Centre Zone which are:

- Plan Change 44 – Residential Chapter Review
- Plan Change 45 – Neighbourhood Centre Zone
- Plan Change 46 – Open Space Zone (not continued due to Plan Stop Legislation)
- Plan Change 47 – Māori Purpose Zone.
- Plan Change 48 – Designations
- Plan Change 49 – Minor Corrections

PC45 – Neighbourhood Centre Zone seeks to add neighbourhood shops in the new zone which has been identified in the 2022 Neighbourhood Shops Report.

Statutory and Planning Context

Refer to the Background and Engagement Report for the full summary of statutory and planning context.

National Planning Standards

The National Planning Standards (NPS) came into effect on 5 April 2019. The purpose is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the of the planning system by providing nationally consistent structure, format, definitions, noise and vibration metrics, and electronic functionality and accessibility.

The National Planning Standards determine the sections that should be included in a District Plan and sets a template that District Plans must follow. Mandatory directions are also set out that determine how the District Plan should be ordered. As part of the review of the Taupō District Plan, we are required to make sure that our Proposed District Plan changes meet these Planning Standards.

Part of the new planning framework requires councils to rename zones. This includes changing the colour codes on the planning maps. Zones will be renamed to the most relevant description of the new zones in the National Planning Standard. This meant our Neighbourhood Shopping Centres Overlay became the Neighbourhood Centre Zone (NCZ) when the plan was converted into National Planning Standard format in 2025.

Description of the Neighbourhood Centre Zone is:

Areas used predominantly for small-scale commercial and community activities that service the needs of the immediate residential neighbourhood.

The colour code is:

Neighbourhood centre zone



RGB: 255, 181, 199

National Policy Statements

National Policy Statements ('NPS') enable Government to prescribe objectives and policies for matters of national significance which are relevant to achieving the sustainable management purpose of the RMA. An NPS may also give direction to local authorities as to how they should 'give effect to' the policies and objectives of the NPS.

NPSs set objectives and policies for matters of national significance and provide government direction. The RMA requires that pursuant to section 75(3)(ba) a district plan must 'give effect to' any national policy statements.

NPSs currently in effect are:

- National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020
- National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020
- National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Generation 2011
- National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2011
- New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010
- National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land 2022
- National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023

- National Policy Statement for Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Industrial Process Heat 2023

National Policy Statement on Urban Development

The National Policy Statement for Urban Development (NPS-UD) came into force on 20 August 2022. It is the government's policy direction to ensure sufficient development capacity and well-functioning urban environments to meet the different needs of people and communities. PC45 gives effect to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD) by providing Neighbourhood Centre Zones that serve the needs of the community.

The plan change is implementing national direction by enabling more Neighbourhood Centre Zone areas.

National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020

The NPSFM 2020 came into effect on 3 September 2020 and provides direction on how freshwater should be managed under the RMA. The NPSFM 2020 supports improved freshwater management in New Zealand by directing regional councils to establish objectives and set limits for fresh water in their regional plans. The fundamental concept, objectives and policies of the NPSFM 2020 are discussed below.

Te Mana o te Wai is the fundamental concept underpinning the NPSFM 2020. It recognises that protecting the health of freshwater protects the health and well-being of the wider environment and protects the mauri of the wai. Te Mana o te Wai involves restoring and preserving the balance between the water, the wider environment, and the community.

The objective of the NPSFM 2020 is to ensure that natural and physical resources are managed in a way that prioritises:

- a) First, the health and wellbeing of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems;
- b) Second, the health needs of people (such as drinking water); and
- c) Third, the ability of people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing, now and in the future.

As the proposed changes within the Neighbourhood Centre Zone will have no effect on the generation of stormwater, the NPS on Freshwater is not relevant.

National Environmental Standards

National Environmental Standards ('NES') are regulations made under the RMA. They provide certainty about rules across the country by setting nationally consistent planning requirements for certain specified activities. An NES prevails over district or regional plan rules unless expressly stated that it does not. It must be consistent with the purpose of the RMA to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.

There are eight National Environmental Standards that are currently in place that prescribe standards that Taupō Council must enforce. The NESs that are relevant to the Neighbourhood Centre Zone include:

- The NES for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health (NESCSC) is a nationally consistent set of planning controls and soil contaminant values. It ensures that land affected by contaminants in soil is appropriately identified and assessed before it is developed and, if necessary, the land is remediated, or the contaminants contained to make the land safe for human use. All territorial authorities are required to observe and enforce the NESCSC. The Council has been administering and enforcing this NES since its enactment in 2012.

Legislative Context – Plan Stop Legislation

In 2025, the Government introduced plan stop legislation that restricted local authorities from notifying or progressing certain plan changes under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). The intent of the legislation was to pause significant plan-making processes while the Government reconsidered the direction of the resource management system, including the repeal of the Natural and Built Environment Act and Spatial Planning Act.

The plan stop provisions applied broadly to plan changes that enabled urban intensification, rezoning, or changes to development capacity, unless an exemption was granted by the Minister. Exemptions could be sought where a plan change was considered to support the efficient functioning of the planning system, remove unnecessary regulatory barriers, or give effect to established strategic directions such as Future Development Strategies.

Application of Plan Stop Legislation to Plan Change 45

Plan Change 45 (Neighbourhood Centre Zone) formed part of a wider package of district plan changes developed to support urban intensification and efficient land use within the Taupō urban environment. The plan change sought to:

- Enable additional neighbourhood centre zoning within established residential catchments; and
- Relax development controls within the Neighbourhood Centre Zone to better support small-scale commercial activity and residential development above ground floor.

As Plan Change 45 proposed rezoning of land and changes to development capacity, it fell within the scope of the plan stop legislation and was unable to proceed to notification without a Government exemption.

Initial Partial Approval of Plan Change 45

An exemption application was lodged with the Government seeking approval for Plan Change 45 as part of a bundled exemption request. Following consideration of that application, Plan Change 45 was approved only in part.

The initial exemption applied narrowly to aspects of the plan change that related to upzoning of additional neighbourhood centre sites. These provisions were considered to align with the exemption criteria as they supported residential intensification by ensuring the provision of local services and contributed to more efficient urban form.

Other components of Plan Change 45—particularly changes to the Neighbourhood Centre Zone provisions beyond site rezoning—were not approved at that time. As a result, those aspects of the plan change were unable to proceed, and the relevant Neighbourhood Centre Zone provisions remained operative and unchanged.

Revision of Plan Change 45 and Subsequent Exemption

Following the partial approval, Plan Change 45 was revised to better align with the Government's exemption framework and to clearly distinguish between provisions that enabled zoning changes and those that altered the regulatory framework.

The revised approach limited the scope of Plan Change 45 to those matters considered consistent with the intent of the plan stop exemptions, including:

- Supporting residential intensification by enabling appropriately located neighbourhood centres; and
- Removing regulatory barriers that constrained the efficient functioning of existing and planned neighbourhood centres.

After these revisions were made, additional components of Plan Change 45 were subsequently granted Government exemption, allowing the plan change to proceed in a more complete form. This enabled both the rezoning of additional neighbourhood centre sites and associated Neighbourhood Centre Zone provisions to progress under the RMA process.

The exemptions granted by the Government indicate that the revised Plan Change 45 is consistent with the objectives of the plan stop framework, including improving plan efficiency, supporting urban intensification, and enabling local-scale economic activity within existing urban areas.

Regional Policy Statements

Section 75(3)(c) of the RMA states that a District Plan must give effect to any Regional Policy Statement.

The Taupō district falls within the jurisdiction of four regional councils: Waikato Regional Council (WRC), Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BOPRC), Hawkes Bay Regional Council (HBRC) and Horizons Regional Council (HRC). Only very small portions of the district fall within HBRC and HRC. There is no neighbourhood shops zone in other regional council boundaries. Therefore, assessment is against the Waikato Regional Policy Statement only.

PC45 gives effect to the Waikato Regional Policy Statement by being an efficient use of urban land (RPS Objective 3.10), responding to changing land use pressures outside the Waikato region which may impact on the built environment within the region (RPS Objective 3.12(h)) and maintaining amenity (RPS Objective 3.21).

Other relevant provisions are in Section 6 Built Environment:

- Policy 6.1 Planned and co-ordinated subdivision, use and development
- Policy 6.11 Implementing Taupo District 2050
- 6A General development principles

Iwi Management Plans

Within the boundaries of the Taupō District are the ancestral lands of four iwi (tribes); Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Tahu / Ngāti Whaoa and Raukawa. Each iwi has associated hapu or sub-tribes.

These tangata whenua groupings play a vital role as kaitiaki (guardians) of natural resources, cultural sites of significance and waahi tapu. Hapu and iwi are connected to the whenua (land) through occupation and whakapapa (genealogy).

These four main iwi hold mana whenua status for different parts of the Taupō District's land area and beyond. They also collaborate with other neighbouring iwi on matters of shared interest. Below is an overview of the various environmental management plans that have been developed by these iwi – either individually, or in partnership with others.

Clause 4A of Schedule 1 of the RMA establishes a process of consultation with iwi authorities before notifying a proposed plan or policy statement, then draft plans and policy statements are provided to iwi within the district/region, with a requirement for Council to have particular regard to any advice received. At the time of writing this report this process is ongoing.

There are the iwi management plans:

- Ngāti Tahu Ngāti Whaoa Iwi Management Plan
- Ngāti Tūwharetoa Iwi Management Plan
- Te Rautaki Taiao a Raukawa
- Whakamarohitia ngā wai o Waikato Te Arawa River Iwi Trust Environmental Plan

As this proposed plan change will not result in any change to the creation of stormwater, the plan change is considered to take into account the matters contained in the iwi management plans in accordance with section 74(2A) of the RMA.

Taupō District Plan Strategic Directions

The strategic objectives set the direction for the District Plan and help to implement the Council's community outcomes. They are indicative of the matters which are important to the Taupō District community and reflect the intended outcomes to be achieved through the implementation of the District Plan.

For the purposes of preparing, changing, interpreting and implementing the District Plan, all other objectives and policies in all other parts of this Plan are to be read and achieved in a manner consistent with the objectives and policies that form these strategic directions.

The policies contained within this chapter have a dual purpose. The policies must deliver the Strategic Objectives and can also be applied directly in the consideration of resource consent applications where there is a requirement to consider District Plan policy. As there are no new objectives and policies Plan Change 45 does not need to consider the Strategic Directions.

District Policy/Strategies

The District Plan does not sit in isolation, but rather it operates with Council's wider suite of policies, plans and strategies to provide direction for decision making. In particular, the following documents have been considered.

Future Development Strategy 2025

This growth strategy has been revised, and Taupō's initial growth strategy, TD2050 has been updated to the Future Development Strategy. This gives effect to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development and the Waikato Regional Policy Statement. The Taupō Future Development Strategy looks at the growth for the District over 35 years to 2060. It uses population projections to identify how much growth is anticipated over that period. It will also identify how many additional homes and land for business is likely to be needed and if land will need to be rezoned to accommodate this.

The strategy considers aspects such as:

- Staging and infrastructure requirements for growth around Taupō town
- Addressing the identified growth around Mangakino, and its infrastructure requirements
- Addressing the lack of spatial planning for Tūrangi
- The role of infill development in existing urban areas
- Availability and capacity of existing infrastructure
- When any existing infrastructure will need upgrading or whether any new infrastructure is needed.

Although no specific objectives within the FDS relate to neighbourhood centres, servicing local neighbourhoods while supporting local needs to be met without or reducing the need to drive support the broader aims of the FDS.

Waikato Regional Plan

In accordance with Section 75(4)(b) of the RMA, an operative plan change must not be inconsistent with a regional plan for any matter under section 31. PC45 is not inconsistent with the Waikato Regional Plan, taking into account that this plan change is limited to changes only in regard to the Neighbourhood Centre Zone.

Engagement

Please refer to the Background and Engagement Report for the full summary of engagement. Plan Change 45 has been consulted on in conjunction with Plan Changes 44, 46 and 47. Therefore this information has been consolidated within the Background and Engagement Report.

2022 Neighbourhood Shops Report

In November 2022, Taupō District council Policy Team staff undertook an analysis of the existing zoning of the Neighbourhood shops. The report also undertook identification of suitable additional Neighbourhood Centres using the following criteria:

Criteria:

- i. Small cluster of existing stores in the residential environment is the primary purpose.
- ii. Predominant activity is non-residential.
- iii. Has a commercial frontage.
- iv. The character of the Neighbourhood Centre is not overtly dominated by one unit or use.
- v. A diversity of small-scale commercial and community activities within residential neighbourhoods, serving local day to day needs.
- vi. Small-scale in terms of compatible with residential area, number of shops, local services, and business operation.
- vii. The scale of such activities will not detrimentally affect the viability of a Town Centre
- viii. Lower pedestrian and traffic movement compared to a Town Centre but provides an active environment to the neighbourhood.
- ix. Limited to no excessive vehicle movement by only having short-term use parking.
- x. New Neighbourhood Centres will be in a location best suited to service growth area covered by that structure plan. The location maximises opportunities for residents to easily walk, cycle or drive.
- xi. High standard of amenity and compatibility with adjoining Residential Environment
- xii. Provide accessible, convenient, and attractive commercial and community activities to service residential neighbourhoods.
- xiii. Promote good design and environmental outcomes

The report recommended that the Neighbourhood Shops overlay be extended to the three identified site outlined previously.

Section 32 Evaluation

Issue One: There are existing neighbourhood shops outside of the Taupō urban area that are not zoned as such

Key Resource Management Issues

The Neighbourhood Shopping Centres overlay was introduced through Plan Changes 28 – 33, and they only relate to sites within the Taupō town. Consideration was given to extend this to those shops outside of Taupō town. Prior to changing the district plan to NPS format,

the District Plan stated that sites not notated as shops in the planning maps must comply with Rule 4a.2.11 which is:

“Except where identified as a Shop on the Planning Maps [30-162;163;164;166;167;168], any retail or office activity within the Residential Areas that exceeds two full time equivalent persons who permanently reside elsewhere than on the site, or 50m² of gross floor area per site (whichever is the lesser), is a discretionary activity”.

This means that sites that meet the description of the neighbourhood centres but are currently excluded from the Neighbourhood Shops overlay must meet stricter performance standards than similar sites located in the Taupō township. This makes it more difficult for operators to carry out site improvements and meet staffing requirements.

The shops area situated at Mata Road Kinloch is split across two different Residential Zones and is not included in the Neighbourhood Shop overlay. This situation makes it more complex for the operators to efficiently run their business and make improvements to it.

The 2022 Neighbourhood Shops Report identified three new sites outside of Taupō town that can be included in the new Neighbourhood Centre Zone. These are appropriate to be rezoned as these are low-to-medium scale shops in the immediate residential neighbourhood and around a local main street.

These three new sites are:

Table 2: Identified Sites	
Site	Location
Convenience Store, Fish & Chip Shop, Restaurant	2,4,6,8 Mata Road, Kinloch
Old Trev Terry Marine Site and Boat Storage	140 Kenrigg Road, Kinloch
Café, Store, Vacant lot, Vacant building, Vet clinic	109, 111, 113, 115, 117, Whakamaru Road Whakamaru
Omori Store, Snappy Takeaways, GAS Omori	94A and B Omori Road, Omori

Outcomes we are seeking to achieve: Identify Shops that are considered appropriate to be a Neighbourhood Centre and include them in the new Neighbourhood Centre Zone.

Options available to address this issue are:

Status quo – no changes to list new shops

1. Add new Neighbourhood Centres that meet the description and provisions of a Neighbourhood Centre

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Option 1: No changes to list Shops identified outside Taupō township	Eliminates the risk that sites would increase their operations to the extent that amenity values are adversely impacted and to cause nuisance to residents.	Any future eligible sites must meet stricter performance standards than the neighbourhood shops already identified in the Neighbourhood Centre Zone. This restricts them from having more staff and developing their site.
Option 2: Add new Neighbourhood Shops that meets the description and provisions of a Neighbourhood Centre	• Ability to list any future eligible sites, especially ones that are located outside the Taupō township. • Ability to employ fulltime employees who reside outside the locality and be able to operate using a larger floor space. • Ensures consistency and make easier operation for businesses.	Operating activity could increase, and this would potentially create some reverse sensitivity effects in the smaller communities where they are located. For example, an increase in vehicle movements may detract from the amenity of the community. However as these shops exist already these effects are likely to be minimal.

Option 2 is the preferred option, as the positive values exceed the potential adverse impacts of the change. These benefits would be especially important for those businesses located at Mata Road Kinloch who have had difficulty with running their operations and making improvements to their sites as they sit across different residential zones. Notating them as a neighbourhood shopping centre would help ensure consistency and make operating these businesses easier.

The major risk of notating these sites is that operating activity could increase and this would potentially create some reverse sensitivity effects in the smaller communities where they are located. For example, an increase in vehicle movements may detract from the amenity of the community.

However, this risk is considered to be low for two reasons. Firstly, the rules specifically state that the operations must be small scale and must remain compatible with the scale of the surrounding residential environment. This means that shopping malls with a large footprint or building envelope would be incompatible with the performance rules. Secondly, many of the identified sites are located on small land parcels that physically limit the scale of operations and are already operating in the capacity of a neighbourhood centre.

Scale and Significance

Section 32(1)(c) states that the level of detail provided within the evaluations must correspond to the scale and significance of the environmental, economic, social, and cultural effects that are anticipated from the implementation of the provisions.

The proposed amendments are minor, while being restricted only to the Neighbourhood Centre Zone. However, the proposed amendments may have a degree of significance on landowners who own allotments that are within the Proposed Neighbourhood Centre Zone, as well as landowners that own allotments directly adjacent to the Proposed Neighbourhood Centre Zone. It is noted that, with the exception of one NCZ, that the areas are all developed. So this means it is only redevelopments that would be subject to the new provisions. In other words this is not a case of rezoning and area that will completely change its character, but rather applying fit for purpose provisions to existing areas of neighbourhood centres.

The scale and significance are assessed within Appendix 1.

Evaluation of the Objectives

Evaluation of the Proposed Objectives against the Purpose of the Act:

Section 32(1)(a) of the Resource Management Act requires the Council to examine the extent to which the objectives are the most appropriate way to achieve the sustainable management purpose of the Resource Management Act.

As there are no proposed new objectives or policies this section does not apply.

Assessment of the Provisions

Identification of Provision Options

1. Status quo – no changes to the performance standards.
2. Change the existing provisions to the proposed new provisions

Option	Source	Relevance How effective are the provisions in achieving the objective	Recommendation
Retain existing provisions	Status Quo	The existing provisions have been derived from the Residential and Mixed Used Zones. Neighbourhood centres have a different character than residential or spa road mixed use zones. There are some site-specific activities which are appropriate and should be provided for in the Neighbourhood Centres and also activities which shouldn't be allowed.	Discard. These provisions have not been tailor made for the Neighbourhood Centre zone, meaning some inappropriate activities may be permitted and other appropriate activities may need a resource consent.

New provisions proposed under PC45: NCZ-R4	
Benefits	Costs
Environmental	
Supports compact urban form and reduces the need to travel for every consumer need.	Minor intensification may impact on neighbouring properties.
Economic	
Commercial activities of an appropriate scale in the NCZ are supported.	Council plan change costs
Social	
NCZ is an appropriate place for community centres to be located. The provisions directly promote social wellbeing by aiming to create accessible urban areas. Walkable environments contribute to healthier lifestyles by promoting physical activity and reducing social isolation.	No social costs

Cultural	
NCZ can assist communities in meeting their cultural needs.	None identified
Economic Growth and Employment Opportunities (s32(2)(a)(i)(ii))	
The proposed change enables small-scale commercial activities such as shops, cafes, and services generate local employment and contribute to economic growth.	
The efficiency and effectiveness of provisions (s 32(1)(b)(ii))	
Efficiency: Tailor made provisions are the most efficient mechanism for achieving the purpose of the Neighbourhood Centre Zone. The amendment means that business owners will be able to expand their operations to appropriate scales for the zone without requiring resource consent, reducing the costs for the landowners.	
Effectiveness: Tailor made provisions are the most effective mechanism for achieving the purpose of the Neighbourhood Centre Zone. The proposed change will be less costly which may encourage more landowners to expand their Neighbourhood Centre operations, thus meeting the social and cultural needs of communities.	
Risk of acting or not acting if there is uncertain or insufficient information (s32(2)(c))	
It is not considered there is uncertain or insufficient information in this circumstance.	
Appropriateness	
It is considered more appropriate to have tailor made provisions for the Neighbourhood Centre Zone, as provided for within the menu of zones within the National Planning Standards. Tailor made provisions allow for the predominant uses and purpose of the Neighbourhood Centre Zone to be provided for.	
Reasons for deciding on the provisions (s32(1)(b)(iii))	
The benefits of the proposed provisions outweigh the costs. The proposed provisions are considered to be the most efficient, effective and appropriate option to achieve the objectives for the Neighbourhood Centre Zone.	

CONCLUSION

After undertaking an evaluation as required by Section 32 of the RMA, a NCZ is considered the most efficient and effect zoning for the proposed sites.

The plan change gives effect to relevant national and regional policy direction and supports sustainable management of resources in the Taupō District.

APPENDIX 1 - SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EFFECTS

Pursuant to section 32(1)(c), an evaluation report must contain a level of detail that corresponds to the scale and significance of the environmental, economic, social, and cultural effects that are anticipated from the implementation of the proposal (section 32(1)(c)). This means that the scale and significance of the effects of the Proposal is the key factor influencing the level of detail required for a section 32 evaluation.

Considerations and criteria for determining scale and significance		Ranking High/Medium/Low
1. Reasons for the change	The addition of more Neighbourhood Centres will allow for more landowners to more easily provide appropriate services within the Neighbourhood Centre Zone.	Medium
2. Degree of shift from the status quo (current approach)	As this Plan Change only proposes added several more sites, the change is not significant.	Medium
3.Environmental effects	Development scale is limited and compatible with adjacent residential zones. The increase is unlikely to result in detrimental environmental effects.	Low
4. Economic effects	The increase is likely to be beneficial to landowners is that they can expand their operations without requiring resource consent, therefore reducing their costs. It enables flexibility to expand operations without additional costs and delays incurred through the resource consent process.	Medium
5.Cultural effects	The plan change enables communities to access services locally and safely, which can indirectly support cultural wellbeing and allow for neighbourhood-based cultural activity. There are no known adverse effects on sites of cultural significance.	Medium

Considerations and criteria for determining scale and significance		Ranking High/Medium/Low
6.Social effects	The plan change promotes walkable, self-sufficient neighbourhoods by further enabling commercial activity close to residential areas. This supports local accessibility.	Low
3. Who and how many will be affected?	Property owners proposed NCZ sites, as well as adjoining residential landowners,	Medium
4. Degree of impact on, or interest from iwi/Māori	The proposed plan change will indirectly support cultural wellbeing and allow for neighbourhood-based cultural activity.	Medium

APPENDIX 2 – ASSESSMENT OF PLAN CHANGE 45 AGAINST HIGHER ORDER DOCUMENTS

This plan change proposes to rezone existing neighbourhood centres to the Neighbourhood Centre Zone (NCZ). No new objectives, policies, or rules are introduced; the existing NCZ provisions remain unchanged. Accordingly, the evaluation under section 32 is proportionate and limited to confirming consistency with higher-order planning instruments.

Waikato Regional Policy Statement

Objective 3.10 – Sustainable and efficient use of resources

Rezoning existing centres supports a compact urban form by recognising small-scale commercial nodes within residential areas. This reduces reliance on private vehicles and minimises the need for large-scale infrastructure expansion.

Objective 3.12(h) – Built Environment

Applying NCZ to existing centres promotes walkability and neighbourhood vitality, ensuring the built environment functions effectively and efficiently.

Objective 3.21 – Amenity

Existing NCZ provisions manage interface effects with residential zones. Rezoning maintains these protections and ensures amenity values are safeguarded.

National Policy Statement on Urban Development

Objective 1 / Policy 1 – Well-functioning urban environments

Recognising existing centres provides convenient access to daily needs, supporting social and economic wellbeing.

Objective 2 / Policy 5 – Responsiveness to change

Rezoning enables centres to adapt to evolving community needs without introducing new regulatory barriers.

Objective 4 / Policy 1(d) – Reducing greenhouse gas emissions

Locating services close to where people live supports active transport and reduces car dependency, contributing to low-emission urban form.

Conclusion

The rezoning is a catch-up exercise that better implements the intent of higher-order documents by formally recognising existing centres. No new provisions are introduced, so the evaluation is limited to confirming alignment rather than reassessing the efficiency or effectiveness of the NCZ provisions.

